The avifauna of the Criş/Körös[1] rivers

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Abstract

This study gives a summary of earlier and recent data concerning the birds fauna of Criş/Körös rivers. In the table can follow the prelevance of the identified 254 species of birds in the valley of the respective rivers. The author particularly emphasises the importance of Cefa fishponds (1000 ha) and Rădvani wood (230 ha) from ornithological point of view and considers that the total protection of these areas must be realised without any hesitation.

Keywords: Criş/Körös rivers, avifauna, protected area proposal.

Introduction

The four rivers spring in the Apuseni Mountains and leave the country in the west of the country. Their upper reach is similar to all common mountain rivers and usually the same bird species can be found there.

These four rivers — the Barcău/Berettyó, the Crişul Repede/Sebes-Körös, the Crişul Negru/Fekete-Körös and the Crişul Alb/Fehér-Körös — flow together towards the plain where in spite of the river-bed regulations they produce many damp living-space. The avifauna of these territories is very rich, because approx. 180 bird species are living here.

The best known avifauna is at the Crişul Repede, this is the best studied place (see bibliography).

1 The first name is Romanian, and the second Hungarian.

Discussion

From the **Barcău** river valley we can mention 89 species. Among the mountains *Troglodytes troglodytes, Phoenicurus ochruros, Sylvia atricapilla, Phylloscopus trochilus,P. collybita, P. sibilatrix, Fringilla coelebs, Turdus merula, Pernis aviporus, Falco subbuteo, Falco tinnunculus* are very frequent. Above the meadows sings the *Alauda arvensis*, on the damp places we can find the *Saxicola rubetra*. It is not absent from the bushes of the valley the *Eritachus rubecola* and the *Luscinia megarhynchos,* or the different warbler species: eg. *Sylvia nisoria, S. borin, S. curruca, S. communis* and the Hippolais icterina. We can find everywhere flocks of *Sturnus vulgaris, Motacilla alba, Lanius collurio,* as mentioning only the best known species. But at Marghita for example the *Gyps fulvus* has occurred, too (14).

On the lower reach of the river the avifauna becomes richer, in the migration period cranes *(Grus grus)* often stay here (2), and geese *(Anser anser)* are also here sometimes by thousands. Through the whole year Otis tarda pairs stay here (9, 10). Here, where the territory is rich in damp places and puddles, are frequent the nests of *Vanellus vanellus, Fulica atra* or even of *Limosa limosa,* too. The *Larus ridibundus* and *Chlidonias niger* can often be found. In this region stork *(Ciconia ciconia)* nests were also numerous in 1958 (1).

The **Crişul Repede** springs on 710 m height above sea level and it is the longest river among the four, the richness of its avifauna is also striking. The bibliography mentions approximately 180 species, and on the upper reach a few alpine species is present, like: *Nucifraga caryocatactes, Cinculus cinculus, Parus ater, Cerhia familiaris, Monticola saxatilis, Regulus regulus, Motacilla cinerea, Ficedula parva, Falco subbuteo, Buteo buteo* and *Fringilla coelebs.*

In the ravine at Vadu Crişului (Criş Straight) the *Tichodroma muraria* (22), Emberiza cia (18), *Prunella modularis is* present and perhaps here is the northest observation point of the *Apus melba* in our country (14). The *Tringa hypoleucos* and *Bubo bubo* is native here (22).

After the river leaves the mountains the number of the bird species becomes greater and "rarities" are found, too. As winter guests we find here the *Gavia arctica* and *Gavia stellata,* from the grebes the *Podiceps auritus* (24), from the heron species the *Egretta garzetta* and *Ardeola ralloides*. We find here the *Melanitta fusca* and the *Clangula hyemalis*. Of course besides of other migratory species we can mention the *Grus grus, Calidris alba, Arenaria interpres, Phalaropus lobatus* (24) *Plectrophenax nivalis* (20), *Stercorarious pomarinus* (28) and the number of the stationary species is also great.

In 1972 the Crişul Repede valley were found 76 stork nests and in a peculiar way they appeared in a greatest frequency in the basin of Huedin (19).

The number of the singing birds is over 70, among them the species of the following families or genera: Alaudidae, Hirundinidae, Corvidae, Paridae, Turdus, Phylloscopus,

Ficedula, Anthus, Motacilla, Fringilla and Emberiza make the picture varied (see the list of species !) (12, 13, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27).

The black **Crişul Negru** is the shortest river and the number of the species according to the bibliogryphy is approximately 80, but this number can be attributed to the fact that this territory was less studied.

On the upper reach we find the *Tringa hypoleucos, Columba palumbus, Cuculus canorus, Alcedo atthis, Nucifraga caryocatactes, Corvus corax, Parus ater, Loxia curvirostra* and the *Pyrrhula pyrrhula,* and other species complete the whole list. (23).

On the lower reach we already find *Ardea cinerea, Accipiter gentilis, Accipiter nisus, Buteo buteo, Falco subbuteo, Picus viridis, P. canus.* The line is finished by species of Corvus, Parus, Turdus and Lanius. (8).

In the plain region the Coracia garrulus, Merops apiaster are common species, but we must mention that we found rarities like the Pastor roseus (16), Tadorna feruginea (33), or the Neophron percnopterus (30), and once a juvenile Bubulcus ibis was found not too far from the border in 10. 22.1993. (8).

Among the avifauna of the white **Crişul Alb** we can mention approximately 100 species. On the upper run of the river the species are the same as the species described on the Crişul Negru. On the lower reach more interesting species were studied. As a curiosity we mention that next to the border exists one of the *Otis tarda* population of the country, approx. 24 specimen. (31). Near the *Anas platyrhynchos, Anas crecca, A. querquedula, A. penelope, A. clypeata* and *Aythya ferina* is present the *Aythya fuligula.* On the damp territories, especially in migration period, very many species are counted. There is present: *Grus grus, Gallinula chloropus, Fulicula atra, Pluvialis squatarola, P. apricaria, Charadrius hiaticula* and different *Caladris species* like *Calidris alpina, C. temminckii, C. ferruginea, C. alba, Philomachus pugnax, Tringa erythropus, T. totanus, T. nebularia, T. ochropus, Gallinago gallinago, Numenius arquata.* The Larus ridibundus is frequent. In this region can be mentioned real "rarities" like *Falco cherrug* (11), *Stercorarius parasiticus* (7). The *Numenius phaeopus* can also be found here. (7).

The bibliography describes many singing bird species, we mention only a few: *Panurus biarmicus, Remiz pendulinus, Luscinia megarhynchos, Lanius excubitor, Motacilla flava* and *Corvus sp.* (29, 32).

This short survey does not exhaust the avifauna of the four rivers region, but if we add to it the birds around **Cefa** and the neighbouring fish ponds introduced in the followings, then the number of the species touches 253, that means the 70 % of the national species.

At the edge of the plain, between two Criş lie the fish ponds of Cefa. One part of these were formed when the Canalul Crişurilor was made in 1905. Later the lake system was enlarged so much that nowadays lies on a 1000 ha territory. This large wetland is visited by many birds. Due to the data of bibliographical (38) and recent studies (personal communication by Péter Pap and Zoltán Szabó D.) approximately 159 bird species are present here. Many birds hatch here (69 species), among these are Glareola pratincola as rare species; the *Chlidonias hybrda* 15-20 pairs; the *Podiceps cristatus* 15-20 pairs and 1-2

pairs of *Podiceps griseigena,* mentioning only the very interesting species (Pap and Szabó, 35, 38).

Here are present all the five Podiceps species, the two Phalacrocorax species and besides the *Bubulcus ibis* all the *Ardea species. Ciconia ciconia, Ciconia nigra, Platalea leucorodia,* twelve Anas species, three Mergus species: *Mergus albellus, M. serator, M. merganser.* Among the predatory birds we found the *Milvus migrans, Haliaëtus albicilla, Hieraaëtus pennatus, Pandion haliaetus, Circaetus gallicus, Falco cherrug, F. peregrinus* (11, 12); *Buteo buteo, B. lagopus, Circus aeruginosus, C. cyneus; Grus grus* and *Porzana porzana, P. parva;* species of Calidris and Tringa. As remarkable rarity we mention the *Chettusia leucura.* Here can be also found *Himantopus himantopus* and *Recurvirostra avosetta, Larus sp.* and *Chlidonias sp.* Besides these species approximately 40 Passeriformes species are present on this territory. In the neighbourhood lies the **Rădvani wood** (230 ha) where the largest Ardea population exists. As it can be observed from the bibliography, that in 1970 there were 373 *Nycticorax nycticorax,* 86 *Ardea cinerea* and 2 *Egretta garzetta* nests. (37). According to the new data (Pap and Szabó) in 1996 there were 520 *Ardea cinerea* and 85 *Nycticorax nycticorax,* and in 1997 there were counted 338 *Ardea cinerea,* 105 *Nycticorax nycticorax* and 15-20 Egretta garzetta nests (Pap and Szabó).

This region is very important from the avifauna point of the view and if we take into consideration the fact that on the other part of the border exists a similar region then we consider that the total protection of these territories must be realised without any hesitation.

Over the border in the region of Biharugra 198 bird species are described, this is an uncompleted list. Here many interesting species are present, too. We mention only few of them because the two regions are very similar according to avifauna point of view.

Here was found the *Pelecanus onocrotalus, Platalea leucorodia, Tadorna tadorna,* but here stays sometimes the *Haliaaëtus albicila, Pandion haliaëtus* and *Falco peregrinus. Great Grus* grus flocks rest here and numerous species of the Tringa genus. Passseriformes species in reeds are also very frequent. (6, 9, 10, 15, 34, 35, 36).

Although this territory has lost from its originality because of the drainage in the last century, the remained damp places need a whole protection, that the aquatic birds - that are not acquainted to borders - might find their living necessities.

Table 1. 1 = Barcău/Berettyó; 2 = Crişul Repede/Sebes-Körös; 3 = Crişul Negru/Fekete-Körös; 4 = Crişul Alb/Fehér-Körös; 5 = Cefa; 6 = Biharugra

No.	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	*Gavia stellata*		+				+
2	*Gavia arctica*		+	+			+
3	*Podiceps ruficollis*		+		+	+	+
4	*Podiceps nigricollis*	+	+		+	+	+
5	*Podiceps auritus*		+			+	
6	*Podiceps grisseigena*		+			+	+
7	*Podiceps cristatus*				+	+	+
8	*Phalacrocorax carbo*					+	+
9	*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*					+	
10	*Pelecanus onocrotalus*						+
11	*Botaurus stellaris*		+			+	+
12	*Ixobrychus minutus*		+			+	+
13	*Nycticorax nycticorax*		+			+	+
14	*Ardeola ralloides*		+		+	+	+
15	*Bubulcus ibis*				+		
16	*Egretta alba*				+	+	+
17	*Egretta garzetta*	+				+	+
18	*Ardea cinerea*	+	+	+	+	+	+
19	*Ardea purpurea*		+			+	+
20	*Ciconia ciconia*	+	+	+	+	+	+
21	*Ciconia nigra*		+			+	+
22	*Platalea leucorodia*					+	+
23	*Plegadis falcinellus*					+	+
24	*Branta rufficollis*						+
25	*Anser anser*	+	+			+	+
26	*Anser albifrons*					+	+
27	*Anser erytropus*						+
28	*Anser fabalis*						+
29	*Cygnus olor*					+	
30	*Cygnus cygnus*						+
31	*Tadorna ferruginea*			+			
32	*Tadorna tadorna*		+				+
33	*Anas platyrhynchos*	+	+		+	+	+
34	*Anas crecca*		+		+	+	+
35	*Anas strpera*					+	+
36	*Anas penelope*		+		+	+	+
37	*Anas acuta*		+			+	+
38	*Anas querquedula*	+	+		+	+	+
39	*Anas clypeata*	+	+		+	+	+
40	*Aythya ferina*		+		+	+	+

No.	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	*Aythya nyroca*	+	+			+	+
42	*Aythya fuligula*				+	+	+
43	*Aythya marila*					+	+
44	*Melanitta fusca*		+				
45	*Clangula hyemalis*		+				
46	*Bucephala clangula*		+			+	+
47	*Mergus albellus*					+	+
48	*Mergus serrator*		+			+	
49	*Mergus merganser*					+	+
50	*Pernis apivorus*	+		+			+
51	*Milvus milvus*						+
52	*Milvus migrans*				+	+	+
53	*Haliaëtus albicilla*					+	+
54	*Accipiter gentilis*		+	+		+	+
55	*Accipiter nisus*		+	+		+	+
56	*Buteo lagopus*		+			+	+
57	*Buteo buteo*		+	+	+	+	+
58	*Buteo buteo vulpinus*						+
59	*Hieraaëtus pennatus*					+	
60	*Aquila clanga*						+
61	*Aquila pomarina*						+
62	*Aquila heliaca*						+
63	*Aquila chrysaëtos*						+
64	*Neophron percnopterus*			+			
65	*Gyps fulvus*	+					
66	*Circaëtus gallicus*					+	
67	*Circus cyaneus*					+	+
68	*Circus macrourus*						+
69	*Circus pygargus*						+
70	*Circus aeruginosus*	+			+	+	+
71	*Pandion haliaëtus*					+	+
72	*Falco cherrug*				+	+	
73	*Falco peregrinus*				+	+	+
74	*Falco subbuteo*	+	+	+		+	+
75	*Falco columbarius*		+				+
76	*Falco vespertinus*	+	+		+	+	+
77	*Falco tinnunculus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
78	*Perdix perdix*		+	+	+	+	+
79	*Coturnix coturnix*	+	+	+	+	+	+
80	*Phasianus colchicus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
81	*Grus grus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
82	*Rallus aquaticus*		+		+	+	+
83	*Porzana porzana*		+			+	+
84	*Porzana parva*					+	+

No.	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6
85	*Crex crex*	+	+	+		+	+
86	*Gallinula chloropus*		+		+	+	+
87	*Fulica atra*	+	+		+	+	+
88	*Otis tarda*	+	+		+		+
89	*Haematopus ostralegus*				+		
90	*Charadrius hiaticula*		+		+	+	+
91	*Charadrius dubius*		+		+	+	+
92	*Pluvialis apricaria*				+	+	+
93	*Pluvialis squatarola*		+		+	+	+
94	*Vanellus vanellus*	+	+		+	+	+
95	*Chettusia leucura*					+	
96	*Arenaria interpres*		+		+	+	+
97	*Calidris minuta*		+			+	+
98	*Calidris temminckii*		+		+		+
99	*Calidris alpina*		+		+	+	+
100	*Calidris ferruginea*		+		+	+	
101	*Calidris alba*		+		+	+	
102	*Philomachus pugnax*		+		+	+	+
103	*Limicola falcinellus*		+				
104	*Tringa erythropus*		+		+	+	+
105	*Tringa totanus*				+	+	+
106	*Tringa stagnatilis*					+	
107	*Tringa nebularia*		+		+	+	+
108	*Tringa ochropus*		+		+	+	+
109	*Tringa glareola*					+	+
110	*Tringa hypoleucos*		+	+		+	+
111	*Limosa limosa*	+	+			+	+
112	*Numenius arquata*		+		+	+	+
113	*Numenius phaeopus*				+	+	
114	*Scolopax rusticola*		+	+	+	+	+
115	*Gallinago gallinago*		+		+	+	+
116	*Himantopus himantopus*		+			+	
117	*Recurvirostra avosetta*				+	+	
118	*Phalaropus lobatus*		+			+	+
119	*Glareola pratincola*					+	+
120	*Stercorarius pomarinus*		+				+
121	*Stercorarius parasiticus*				+		
122	*Larus minutus*		+			+	+
123	*Larus ridibundus*	+	+		+	+	+
124	*Larus fuscus*					+	
125	*Larus argentatus*		+		+	+	+
126	*Larus canus*		+		+	+	+
127	*Chlidonias niger*	+	+		+	+	+
128	*Chlidonias leucopterus*		+			+	+

No	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6
129	*Chlidonias hybrida*		+		+	+	
130	*Hydroprogne tschegrava*						+
131	*Sterna hirundo*		+		+	+	
132	*Sterna albifrons*		+				
133	*Columba palumbus*		+	+		+	+
134	*Streptopelia decaocto*	+	+	+	+	+	+
135	*Streptopelia turtur*	+	+			+	+
136	*Cuculus canorus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
137	*Tyto alba*	+					+
138	*Bubo bubo*		+				+
139	*Asio otus*	+	+		+	+	+
140	*Asio flammeus*		+				+
141	*Athene noctua*	+	+	+	+	+	+
142	*Strix aluco*	+	+				+
143	*Caprimulgus europaeus*	+	+		+		+
144	*Apus apus*		+			+	+
145	*Apus melba*		+				
146	*Alcedo atthis*	+	+	+		+	+
147	*Merops apiaster*		+	+		+	+
148	*Coracias garrulus*	+		+	+	+	+
149	*Upupa epops*	+	+	+	+		+
150	*Jynx torquilla*	+	+	+	+		+
151	*Picus viridis*	+	+	+	+	+	+
152	*Picus canus*	+	+	+		+	+
153	*Dryocopus martius*		+	+			
154	*Dendrocopus major*	+	+	+	+	+	+
155	*Dendrocopus syriacus*	+	+			+	+
156	*Dendrocopus medius*		+				+
157	*Dendrocopus leucotus*			+	+		
158	*Dendrocopus minor*		+	+			+
159	*Picoides tridactylus*			+			
160	*Galerida cristata*	+	+	+	+	+	+
161	*Lullula arborea*		+		+		
162	*Alauda arvensis*	+	+	+		+	+
163	*Riparia riparia*		+			+	+
164	*Hirundo rustica*	+	+	+	+	+	+
165	*Delichon urbica*	+	+	+		+	+
166	*Oriolus oriolus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
167	*Garrulus glandarius*	+	+	+	+	+	+
168	*Pica pica*	+	+	+	+	+	+
169	*Nucifraga caryocatactes*		+	+			
170	*Corvus monedula*	+	+	+	+	+	+
171	*Corvus frugilegus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
172	*Corvus corone cornix*	+	+	+	+	+	+

No.	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6
173	*Corvus corax*		+	+		+	+
174	*Panurus biarmicus*				+	+	+
175	*Parus palustris*	+	+	+			+
176	*Parus ater*		+	+		+	
177	*Parus caeruleus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
178	*Parus major*	+	+	+	+	+	+
179	*Aegythalos caudatus*	+	+	+		+	+
180	*Remiz pendulinus*				+	+	+
181	*Sitta europaea*	+	+	+	+		+
182	*Tichodroma muraria*		+				
183	*Certhia familiaris*		+	+			
184	*Certhia brachydactyla*	+					+
185	*Cinclus cinclus*		+				
186	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	+	+	+	+	+	+
187	*Saxicola rubetra*	+	+		+		+
188	*Saxicola torquata*	+	+		+		+
189	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	+	+				+
190	*Monticola saxatilis*		+				
191	*Phoenicurus ochruros*	+	+				+
192	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*	+	+				+
193	*Erithacus rubecula*	+	+	+		+	+
194	*Luscinia megarhynchos*	+	+	+	+	+	+
195	*Luscinia svecica*						+
196	*Turdus pilaris*		+			+	+
197	*Turdus torquatus*			+			
198	*Turdus merula*	+	+	+	+	+	
199	*Turdus iliacus*		+				
200	*Turdus philomelos*	+	+	+	+		+
201	*Turdus viscivorus*		+	+			+
202	*Locustella luscinioides*					+	+
203	*Locustella naevia*					+	
204	*Acrocephalus paludicola*						+
205	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*		+			+	+
206	*Acrocephalus palustris*					+	+
207	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*		+			+	+
208	*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*		+			+	+
209	*Hippolais icterina*	+				+	+
210	*Sylvia nisoria*	+					+
211	*Sylvia borin*	+					+
212	*Sylvia atricapilla*	+	+	+			+
213	*Sylvia communis*	+				+	+
214	*Sylvia curruca*	+	+			+	+
215	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	+			+		+
216	*Phylloscopus collybita*	+	+	+		+	+

No.	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6
217	*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*	+	+	+			+
218	*Regulus regulus*		+				+
219	*Regulus ignicapillus*						+
220	*Ficedula hypoleuca*		+				
221	*Ficedula albicollis*	+	+				
222	*Ficedula parva*		+				
223	*Muscicapa striata*	+	+			+	+
224	*Prunella modularis*				+	+	
225	*Anthus campestris*	+	+				+
226	*Anthus trivialis*	+	+				+
227	*Anthus pratensis*		+		+		
228	*Anthus spinoletta*		+				+
229	*Motacilla flava*	+	+		+	+	+
230	*Motacilla cinerea*		+	+			
231	*Motacilla alba*	+	+	+	+	+	+
232	*Bombycilla garrulus*		+				+
233	*Lanius collurio*	+	+	+		+	+
234	*Lanius minor*	+	+	+	+	+	+
235	*Lanius excubitor*		+	+	+	+	+
236	*Sturnus roseus*			+			
237	*Sturnus vulgaris*	+	+	+	+	+	+
238	*Passer domesticus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
239	*Passer montanus*	+	+	+	+	+	+
240	*Fringilla coelebs*	+	+	+		+	
241	*Fringilla montifringilla*		+				
242	*Serinus serinus*		+				
243	*Carduelis chloris*		+	+			+
244	*Carduelis spinus*		+				+
245	*Carduelis carduelis*	+	+	+	+	+	+
246	*Carduelis cannabina*		+		+	+	
247	*Loxia curvirostra*			+			
248	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*		+	+			+
249	*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*		+				
250	*Emberiza calandra*	+	+			+	+
251	*Emberiza citrinella*	+	+	+	+	+	+
252	*Emberiza cia*		+				
253	*Emberiza schoeniclus*		+		+	+	+
254	*Plectrophenax nivalis*		+				+

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